



EmployeeUPDATE

Our Mission: To serve the people of North Carolina by enabling individuals, families and communities to be healthy and secure, and to achieve social and economic well-being.

A monthly publication for employees of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Gov. Perdue appoints Lanier M. Cansler as DHHS secretary

The Department of Health and Human Services welcomed back a familiar face when Gov. Beverly Eaves Perdue appointed Lanier M. Cansler as secretary on Jan. 12.

Cansler previously served as DHHS deputy secretary from 2001 to 2005. He was responsible for the management, oversight and guidance of the department's business functions, including its \$12 billion budget and more than 18,000 employees. He left the department in 2005 to return to the private sector.

Cansler was elected to four terms in the N.C. House of Representatives, where he served as vice-chairman of the House Finance Committee, co-chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, co-chairman of the Joint Legislative Health Care Oversight Commission, and vice-chairman of the House Committee on



Lanier M. Cansler was sworn as DHHS secretary on Jan. 13. His wife, Barbara, held the Bible for the ceremony, held in the Senate chambers of the old Capitol. It is the same Bible on which Secretary Cansler took his oath when sworn in 1995 as a representative in the N.C. House.

Public Health. He also served on the Mental Health Committee and the Health Care Delivery Committee. He was ranked among the most effective members of the House of Representatives by the North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research. ■

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Levine awards honor innovations, advancement of public health

Brunswick County Health Director Don Yousey and Dean Smith, retired long-time basketball coach at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, have each been awarded the 2009 Ronald H. Levine Legacy Award for Public Health in recognition of their outstanding contributions to public health in North Carolina.

The two awards were announced by State Health Director Leah Devlin at the 2009 State Health Directors Conference in Raleigh on Jan. 24.

Named for former North Carolina state health director Dr. Ron Levine, the annual awards honor individuals whose life work on behalf of the public's health has resulted in significant, sustainable and positive improvements in North Carolina's public health system.

At the conclusion of the award ceremony, Levine made a surprise presentation of a 2009 Legacy Award for Public Health to Dr. Devlin. She retired on Jan. 31 after 30 years in public health, serving on local, state and national levels. She had been state health director and director of the N.C. Division of Public Health since 2001.

The 2009 Levine Award for Local Innovation in public health was presented to Yousey, who has been health director of Brunswick County for more than 10 years. Yousey was honored for a long list of accom-



Dr. Ron Levine and State Health Director Leah Devlin

plishments, including securing grant money for a new outreach medical unit, establishing a regional office to administer case management services for Medicaid clients, and starting a clinic for seniors with no medical home.

Yousey also led a focused effort by the health department and Minority Infant Mortality Task Force that resulted in two consecutive years of no infant mortalities a zero infant mortality rate in the county. Among his many other successful projects was the establishment of an umbrella organization to enable area local health departments to provide low-cost diabetes self-management education that is reimbursable by Medicaid, Medicare, and private health insurance. The pilot project was one of five in

the state to get American Diabetes Association approval in 2008.

A native of Rome, N.Y., Yousey received his master's degree in public health from the University of Texas at Houston in 1984. He retired to North Carolina from the U.S. Air Force as a lieutenant colonel in 1993. He served as health director of Bladen County for almost four years before transferring to Brunswick County. Yousey is past president of the North Carolina Association of Local Health Directors and was the recipient of their 2003 Health Director of the Year and 2005 Ham Stevens awards.

The Levine Award for Statewide Impact in Public Health went to Smith, who spent 39 years coaching basketball

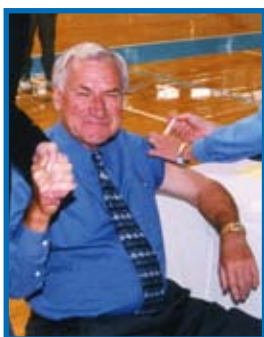
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Levine awards cont. from page 2



Don Yousey, left, was joined at the Levine awards by Dr. Levine, Dr. Devlin, Dr. Hugh Tilson, and two former DHHS secretaries, Drs. Sarah Morrow and H. David Bruton.

at UNC – the first three years as an assistant and the final 36 as head coach. At the time he retired, he was the winningest and among the most respected coaches in the history of Division I collegiate basketball. Recognized as one of the great minds of the game, Smith is widely known and respected for his intelligence, his innovation, and his love for his players.



Dean Smith receives a flu shot during a clinic in Orange County.

In the world of public health, Smith is also known and appreciated

for his ongoing efforts to encourage North Carolinians – particularly senior citizens – to get their annual flu shots. Over the last nine years, Smith has rolled up his sleeve every year to show how easy and painless it is to be vaccinated against the flu, even going as far as tossing the coin at a senior adult basketball game to highlight the importance of annual flu shots. His punch-line? “Get your flu shot – it’s the best shot you’ll ever take.” ■

SECU offers free tax preparation for qualified members

Are you tired of paying someone else to guide you through basic tax preparation? Are you getting the refund you deserve by claiming all available tax credits for which you may qualify?

Many State Employee Credit Union members are faced with difficult questions at tax time. To address these concerns, SECU has partnered with the IRS to offer Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) for qualified members in all branch locations. VITA is a free IRS-sponsored program available to help taxpayers with a household income of \$42,000 or less complete and electronically file basic tax returns. Tax assistance will be provided by SECU employees trained through the IRS VITA program.

VITA-trained SECU employees will be available to complete tax returns for qualified members through April 15 by appointment only.

For details, contact your State Employees' Credit Union branch office or visit SECU's website www.ncsecu.org.

State health director retires

Dr. Leah McCall Devlin, state health director and director of the Division of Public Health, retired Jan. 31 after 30 years of public health service. Her work and leadership on the local, state and national levels have earned widespread respect as well as numerous awards and recognitions.

Due in large part to Devlin's work, North Carolina is now viewed as a national leader in addressing many health issues, and as a model for effective programs and for coalition building. Under her leadership, the division — in partnership with other agencies and groups — has improved infant mortality and teen pregnancy rates; continued to keep the childhood immunization program among the most comprehensive and effective in the nation; developed a statewide initiative to address obesity; strongly addressed risky behaviors such as smoking, physical inactivity and poor eating habits; instituted an inter-agency School Health Matrix Team to improve the health and wellbeing



Leah Devlin

of children through a comprehensive school health program; worked tirelessly to reduce HIV and other communicable diseases; and is continually working to more effectively protect and improve the health of the people who live and work in North Carolina.

Among other advances over the past eight years, the division has strengthened public health infrastructure; initiated an accreditation program

for both local and state health departments; improved and expanded electronic disease surveillance and reporting systems; and greatly increased the state's readiness to deal with public health emergencies from the local to the national level — North Carolina ranked 10/10 in preparedness in a recent national report.

A three-time graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Devlin holds a B.S. in Dentistry from UNC, a D.D.S. degree from the UNC School of Dentistry, and a M.P.H. from the UNC School of Public Health.

Devlin began working at the Wake County Department of Health in 1979 and became county health director in 1986. She joined the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services in 1996 and was named state health director and division director in 2001. ■

Sheppard retires

Jackie Sheppard, center, flanked by his wife, Gloria, and DHHS Secretary Lanier M. Cansler, shares a laugh during Sheppard's retirement reception marking 36 years in state service.

Sheppard, a long-time veteran of the former Division of Facility Services, spent the last five years as assistant secretary for long-term care and family services.



THE Cultural Competency CORNER

By Gloria Sánchez, Latino Public Information Officer



Reading between lines? Improve cross-cultural communication

How can we communicate better with our diverse population and be in tune with people's values and beliefs? Words can mean one thing to you and something entirely different to someone else.

Your clients might not be fluent in English and may lack the basic understanding of medical terminology and procedures. Even when your clients speak English as their primary language, their value systems and comprehension level could come from different influences.

The communication process can also become distorted when emotions, assumptions, stereotypes, the use of an interpreter or environmental distractions are involved. To improve your oral and written communications, consider these three factors:

1. **Cultural values and beliefs** – Each culture holds a distinct set of values and knowledge about health care and social services. For example, for Latinos, it would be a sign of disrespect to question the actions of an authority figure such as a doctor or social worker. So it is a good idea to ask Latinos to repeat the information they gave been given, to enhance explanations and avoid misunderstandings.
2. **Linguistic competence** – Even native English-speakers might have trouble understanding medical terms, prescription labels and instructions. Listen, show interest, speak in plain language, use visual aids and give examples when possible. Ask the client to repeat information. And focus on one point at a time.
3. **Health literacy level** – Your client's ability to find, understand and interpret health information correctly can depend on his or her age, income, employment, education, or ethnic group. Many still confuse the words teaspoon and tablespoon, for example.

We should never stop learning about others and ourselves. Learn as much as you can about the population you serve. There are numerous articles online about cultural competency. One useful site is the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Cultural Competency Resources page (www.hrsa.gov/culturalcompetence). There is cultural information about African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos. There is also information suggesting how to provide services to people with disabilities, alternative lifestyles, and older adults. ■

¡Hasta pronto!

Gloria Sanchez

11 from DHHS complete Certified Public Manager Program

Eleven DHHS managers graduated last fall after completing a two-year program aimed at improving their skills to become better problem solvers and leaders in state government through the Certified Public Manager Program.

At a graduation exercise held Oct. 6 at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh, former DHHS Secretary Dempsey Benton recognized the graduates who work within the department.

Graduates from DHHS are: Julie Bagley, Division of Social Services; Regina M. Brooks, Heather Laffler, Lorie Pugh and Melynda Swindells, Division of Child Development; Cindy H. DePorter and Ibtisam Zadari, Division of Health Service Regulation; Venessa Williams Hodge, Division of Medical Assistance; Robert W. McKie, Jr., formerly of the Division of Public Health and now with the General Assembly; Paris Penny, Division of Budget and Analysis; Lora Smathers, Black Mountain Neuro-Medical Treatment Center.



Certified Public Manager Program graduates from DHHS include, front row, left to right, Paris Penny, Lorie Anne Pugh, Regina M. Brooks; second row, Melynda G. Swindells, Lora L. Smathers, Heather Laffler; third row, Robert W. McKie Jr., Julie Bagley, Venessa Williams Hodge and Cindy H. DePorter.

The Certified Public Manager Program is intended to increase the quality, efficiency and productivity of state government by improving the leadership abilities of employees in management positions.

Employees participating in the program completed 10 courses and a project. This was the twenty-ninth class to complete the program since it began in 1981. The Certified Public Manager designation is granted by authority of the National Certified Public Manager Consortium which has reviewed and accredited the North Carolina Certified Public Manager Program. ■

DHHS teachers receive National Board certification

The Office of Education Services (OES) announced that seven DHHS teachers became certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) during the 2008 certification cycle.

The teachers certified this year teach in programs across the state: Amanda Sitz from Wright School in Durham, and Sandy Bryant, Dana Fox, Shirley Hand, Susan Puckett and Kathy Russell from the Governor Morehead Preschool Program. One counselor also was certified: Leslie Corley from the N.C. School for the Deaf in Morganton.

The newly certified teachers bring the DHHS total to 52. North Carolina has 14,211 National Board certified teachers. Board certified teachers make up 15 percent of the teaching force in North Carolina, more than in any other state. Nationally, there are 74,000 board

certified teachers, nearly double the number that existed in 2003.

“Our department is extremely fortunate in attracting and retaining a significant number of high-quality teachers to serve in the educational programs that we provide,” said Dr. Dwight Pearson, superintendent of the OES. “The quality of teachers working with the diverse group of children and adults served by DHHS is evidenced by those achieving national board certification each year.”

Currently, teachers in all DHHS educational programs are eligible to participate if they hold a continuing North Carolina teaching license, have been employed by the state as a teacher for at least three years, and are currently in a state-paid teacher position.

Founded in 1987, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards is an independent, nonprofit, nonpartisan, and non-governmental organization dedicated to advancing the quality of teaching and learning. National Board certification is the highest credential in the teaching profession.

A teacher-driven, voluntary process established by NBPTS, certification is achieved through a rigorous, performance-based assessment that typically takes one to three years to complete and measures what accomplished teachers should know and be able to do. As part of the process, teachers build a portfolio that includes student work samples, assignments, videotapes and a thorough analysis of their classroom teaching. Additionally, teachers are assessed on their knowledge of the subjects they teach. ■

Bilingual Resource Group stands ready to help with Latino outreach

DHHS now has a Bilingual Resource Group, formed to provide technical assistance to any division or program within the department that is interested in increasing outreach to and education for Latinos.

The group is composed of a diverse assembly of bilingual and bicultural professionals from the department and partner agencies. Its members have

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Photo key on following page.

Bilingual cont. from page 7

years of experience working with and serving Latinos in various fields.

The group came together with the purpose of providing expert guidance in the conceptualization, design, development and evaluation of Latino health and social outreach. It will also serve as the advisory group for the DHHS Spanish Web site.

The group will meet four times this year (every 3 months) to discuss ways to improve the capacity of DHHS to better communicate, educate and serve Latinos.

For more information, please contact Gloria Sánchez, Latino public information officer, at (919) 733-9190 or by email: gloria.sanchez@ncmail.net. ■

Key to photo on preceding page

Bilingual group ready to help

From left to right, front row, Rogelio Valencia, Lois Nilsen, Gloria Sánchez, María Fernandez, Marie Miranda-Robles, Fiorella Horn-Guerra, Reinaldo Olavarria, Julio Reyes; back row, Alvina Long, Terry Hodges, Eika Veronica Knight, Leonor Clavijo, Norma Martí, Tania Connaughton-Espino, Gabriela Zabala.

Find local and national health statistics with the click of a mouse!

Curious about the rates of disease and illness in your area compared to the national average? Working on a presentation requiring demographic, mortality, or prevention data?

Check out **Quick Health Data Online**, a free health statistics database provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Women's Health.

Quick Health Data Online provides state- and county-level data for all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and possessions. Data are available by gender, race and ethnicity and come from a variety of national and state sources. The system is organized into 11 main categories, including demographics, mortality, natality, reproductive health, violence, prevention, disease and mental health. Within each main category, there are numerous subcategories.

Quick Health Data Online includes extensive information on the following topic areas:

- Chronic and infectious diseases
- Prevention
- Maternal Health
- Demographics
- Mental Health
- Violence and Abuse
- Mortality
- Access to Care

Easily generate maps as well as charts and tables to prepare your data for a presentation or report. Additional chart features in the system can present data in horizontal or vertical bar charts, showing trend lines, or in pie charts.

Check it out at www.womenshealth.gov/quickhealthdata. ■

Caswell staff strut their stuff at fashion show



Brenda Edwards (seated) and Kathy Flowers work in Caswell's Sewing Room.

The bosses served the staff this past Christmas as Environmental Services Director Clemes Sanders and his team of supervisors purchased food and cooked up a barbecue dinner as a gift to their employees.

Members of the Environmental Services Department at Caswell Developmental Center in Kinston also held a fashion show at their Dec. 17 Christmas. As everyone finished eating, Brenda Wooten, a member of the house-



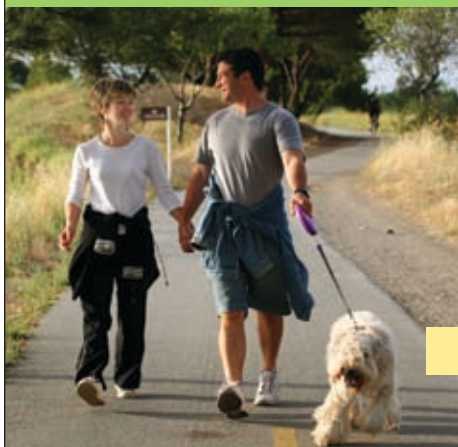
Environmental Services staff go western! From left: Linda Grant, Sherry Hart, Emilio Alvarado, Geraldine Yates, Norrece Hines, Irma Infante, Ronnie Hines, and Terry Artis.

keeping staff, acted as emcee for a Western Wear Fashion Show featuring fellow Environmental Services employees.

Brenda Edwards, who works in Caswell's Sewing Room, used her sewing talents at home to create the outfits modeled in the show. She sewed the outfits from patterns she created based on the models' measurements using fabric she purchased. When asked about her co-worker's amazing talent, Kathy Flowers said, "Sewing is a lost art. You've got to have a passion and love for it because it takes patience."

More than 125 staff enjoyed the dinner, which was held at the Caswell's Leisure Activity Center. ■

Eat Smart, Move More Health Tip



Choose to Move More Every Day

Physical activity is essential for all of us. Children, adults and seniors can benefit from moderate activity every day. Take a walk with a friend, take the stairs instead of the elevator, or work in your yard. Dancing works too and is great fun! Thirty minutes or more of motion for adults and 60 minutes for children on most days can help keep you in shape and feeling good. Can't find a 30 minute chunk of time? Break it up throughout the day.

For more tips on how to move more every day where you live, learn, earn, play and pray, visit

www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com



82nd Airborne Band plays, teaches at Governor Morehead School

They were all in uniform but their mission was loud and clear: music, not military action.

The 82nd Airborne Division All-American Band came to the campus of the Governor Morehead School for the Blind to hold a concert on Jan. 23 and to share some special time with the students.

Prior to the concert performed for the student body and school staff, several of the band members held master classes with members of the GMS band. Afterward, those involved agreed that it was a learning experience for both the young and the old.

The band is scheduled later this spring to ship out to Afghanistan on a mission not only as musical ambassadors to entertain the troops, but also as educators as they train a new Afghan army band. ■



Noah Long, Sgt 1st class Shelby Barber and Sgt. Padraic Kenny work together during the master class with the GMS band.



Cpl. Kyle Kennedy of the 82nd Airborne band works with Tavish Yarborough on the tuba.



Zeke Jones and Sgt. Jeremy Morris discuss many musical interests including a shared love of ZZ Top during their tutoring time before the concert.

Wilson Regional Center staffer brings real-life example to sixth graders

Kim McQueen's sixth grade communication skills class at Wilson's Toisnot Middle School experienced first-hand what it is like to be blind on Jan. 13.

That's when deaf-blind specialist Lea Moynihan left her office at the Wilson Regional Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing to spend some time with the academically gifted students.



Lea Moynihan, deaf-blind specialist from the Wilson Regional Center, speaks to the students about her experiences growing up with deafness.



Students in Kim McQueen's sixth grade communication skills class take turns experiencing how someone with visual impairments is led by a trusted companion.

The students had been reading about the life of Helen Keller in their literature studies. Lea came to class to give them a real-world experience of the challenges faced by people who are deaf-blind.

The students were able to ask Lea questions about her own experiences as a person with deafness and visual impairment. Lea also had the students divide into pairs to practice leading one another while

one student was blindfolded. This experience gave the children an opportunity to experience some of the challenging aspects of living with a visual impairment. ■

Eat Smart, Move More Health Tip



Re-Think Your Drink

We all love a refreshing drink with a meal, as a snack, or after physical activity. Sodas, sweet tea and other sugary drinks taste great, but have a lot of calories and no nutrients. Next time you're thirsty, re-think your drink. Try water with lemon or other flavored, unsweetened drinks instead.

For more tips on how to re-think your drink where you live, learn, earn, play and pray, visit

www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com



DHHS Web redesign, page certification move forward

DHHS is well on its way to redesigning its vast Web presence, focusing on helping site visitors accomplish their tasks.

The Web site, **www.ncdhhs.gov**, provides a single look and feel, with predictable navigation, plain language, and a high level of accessibility for site visitors with disabilities.

“The Web is a primary communication tool. We need to be as professional and strategic with the Web as we are with other forms of communication,” said DHHS Secretary Lanier M. Cansler. “The redesign project and Public Affairs oversight of existing Web sites is improving the quality of our online information.”

In the recently released “State of the Web” for DHHS, details are provided on where the department has been and where it is going with its Web site.

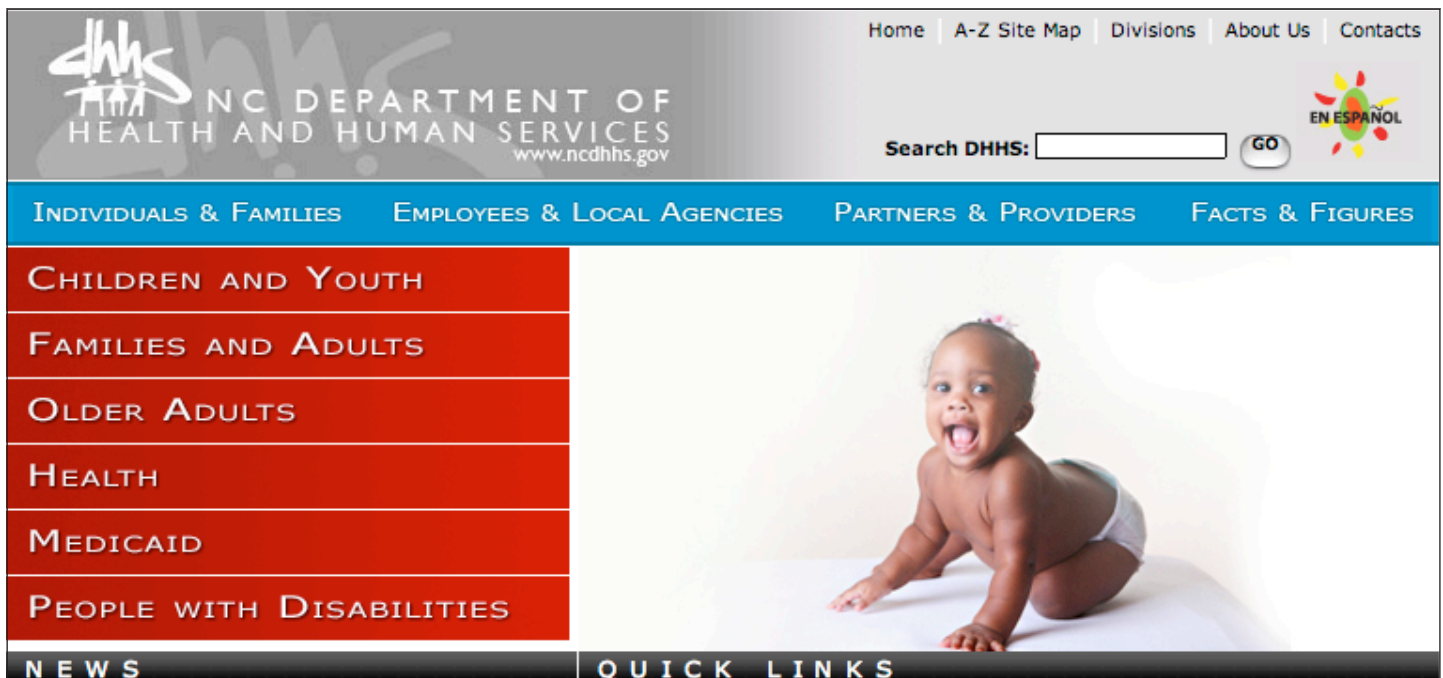
Some highlights from the report:

- Redesigned, reorganized and rewritten Medicaid consumer Web pages instantly drew 100 percent more site visitors to an already highly trafficked area of the DHHS site.
- In 2008, every page in all 125 DHHS Web sites was reviewed for accuracy and timeliness. All divisions/offices reported that this “certification” helped them identify outdated content, and half said that 25 percent or more of their pages needed attention.

Several divisions and offices are working to redesign their Web sites with templates in the new design. The Division of Medical Assistance will release its redesigned site in February. The Division of Information Resource Management, the Office of Medicaid Management Information Systems, and the Office of Rural Health and Community Care are in the process of redesigning their sites.

Divisions and offices interested in redesigning their Web sites should contact Departmental Web Manager Lois Nilsen at 919-715-4394.

The State of the Web Report can be found at **www.ncdhhs.gov/redesign-project**.



DHHS WELLNESS INITIATIVE

Annual DHHS Employee Wellness Survey Results

Every year, the DHHS Worksite Wellness Program asks employees for feedback on worksite wellness programs and identification of work-related barriers that prevent participation in wellness activities.

The on-line survey also asks what types of worksite wellness programs employees would like, and what changes employees have made in the last year related to healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco use and stress management. Survey responses help us better plan wellness activities to meet employees' needs and interests. Results also help point out major barriers that prevent employees from participating.

Last fall, 4,384 DHHS employees responded to the 2008 on-line wellness survey. Each DHHS wellness committee has received a summary report of their employees' responses which they can use in developing their next annual wellness plan. For DHHS employees without work email, a random phone survey and focus groups for shift workers are being conducted at our facilities. Those results will be reported separately when completed.

Following are highlights from all of the on-line survey responses.

Managers and supervisors, whenever possible, can help support employees by organizing work requirements so that employees can take a regularly scheduled lunch break. Scheduled breaks are important not just for wellness activities – it is critical that employees have time away from their work station to eat, relieve stress, and prevent muscle tension. A meal break taken away from the work station has been shown to increase productivity and improve focus on work tasks. ■

Results of 2008 DHHS Employee Wellness Survey

Participation

- **54 percent** participated in a worksite wellness activity in the past year.
- **Walking** continues to be the most popular worksite wellness activity (29 percent) followed by using a fitness area at work. About 8 percent of employees participated in worksite fitness or weight management classes.
- Almost one-third received **flu shots** at work, and 10-15 percent participated in **health screenings** and/or **health fairs** at work.
- **Major reasons for not participating** in wellness activities included work responsibilities preventing taking a lunch break (39 percent) or irregular work schedules (25 percent) preventing joining scheduled activities offered during the lunch break. Twelve percent reported work-related travel prevented their participating. Only 7 percent reported that the wellness activities offered did not interest them.

Improved Health Behaviors Within Last 12 Months

- **Walking or exercising more** (49 percent), **choosing healthier meals and snacks** (50 percent), **eating more fruits and vegetables** (49 percent)
- 1,113 employees **moved closer to a health weight**
- 117 **quit using tobacco** and 131 **reduced tobacco use**.
- One-fifth of employees reported **managing stress better**.

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Adoption Profile

Introducing Justin

Justin is an energetic and talkative boy. His favorite activities are playing video games, dancing, fishing, swimming, and making things with LEGOs. Justin also enjoys playing football and being active. He intends to either play professional football or join the military.

Justin attends special resource classes at the campus where he lives. His teachers believe that, with motivation, he could earn much higher grades. Through counseling he is improving his social skills and working on thinking before he acts. Justin has responded well to the structure of a level system and his relationships with caregivers and peers have improved.



Justin, b. July 4, 1992

A Family for Justin

An adoptive family for Justin will need to have therapeutic training to help him continue to make progress in both his social and personal life. He particularly needs strong, but loving, parents as positive role models. They should be prepared and accepting of being a respite family for Justin until he is able to live within a family setting. He requires constant supervision and should be the only or youngest child in the home.

For more information on Justin or on adoption and foster care in general, call N.C. Kids Adoption and Foster Care Network toll-free at 1-877-NCKIDS-1 (1-877-625-4371).



DHHS Wellness Initiative cont. from page 13

Wellness Activities Employees Want

- Indoor fitness area with equipment
- Walking clubs
- Stress-relieving activities
- Stretching/relaxation classes
- Fitness/exercise classes
- Access to healthier vending and meals
- Weight management and healthy eating classes
- Annual health fairs with health screening tests and flu shots
- Ergonomic assessment

DHHS Employee Update is published monthly by the Office of Public Affairs for employees of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Please send your comments and story ideas to: Jim.Jones@ncmail.net, or by mail to DHHS Office of Public Affairs, 2001 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2001

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